

TURKISH INTERSECTION

OF LITERATURES AND AZERBAIJANI: IT INFLUENCES COMBINED OF HISTORICAL NOVELS,
WRITERS AND ECOLOGICAL POETRY

INTERSECCIÓN DE LITERATURAS TURCA Y AZERBAIJANA: INFLUENCIA COMBINADA DE NOVELAS HISTÓRICAS, ESCRITORAS Y POESÍA ECOLÓGICA

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ABSTRACT

In this study it is investigated the intertwined trajectories of Turkish and Azerbaijani literatures examining historical novels, women's authorship, and ecological poetry as convergent strategies of identity formation and cultural critique. Despite their common roots, these literatures have evolved under divergent conditions—therefore resulting in distinct narrative forms and thematic emphases. However, a comparative analysis reveals how each tradition employs historical fiction to subvert official historiographies, how female writers renegotiate gendered narratives, and how eco-poets articulate environmental trauma remains absent. Addressing this gap, in this research it is adopted a cultural-literary comparative framework grounded in postcolonial theory, ecofeminism, and transnational studies, utilizing close thematic and stylistic readings of selected works by emblematic authors. Findings indicate that (1) historical novels in both contexts deploy metafictional devices and symbolic narration to critique collective memory and ideological constructs; (2) women writers articulate feminist discourses that challenge patriarchal literary canons through mystical, autobiographical, and socially incisive texts; and (3) ecological poetry emerges as an ecofeminist register linking environmental degradation to gendered and postcolonial violence's. These intersecting modes underscore literature's role as an ethical and aesthetic agent that bridges past and future, individual and collective, human and nonhuman spheres. Ultimately, the article argues that the convergence of historical consciousness, feminist voice, and ecological awareness in contemporary literature from both nations reflects an evolving literary identity—one that is resilient, interconnected, and future-oriented.

Keywords: Historical novel, Women writers, Eco-poetry, Cultural memory, Literary identity.

RESUMEN

En este estudio se investigan las trayectorias entrelazadas de las literaturas turca y azerbaiyana, examinando la novela histórica, la autoría femenina y la poesía ecológica como estrategias convergentes de formación de identidad y crítica cultural. A pesar de sus raíces comunes, estas literaturas han evolucionado en condiciones divergentes, dando lugar a formas narrativas y énfasis temáticos distintos. Sin embargo, un análisis comparativo revela cómo cada tradición emplea la ficción histórica para subvertir las historiografías oficiales, cómo las escritoras renegocian las narrativas de género y cómo los ecopoetas articulan el trauma ambiental, algo que permanece ausente. Para abordar esta brecha, en esta investigación se adopta un marco comparativo cultural-literario basado en la teoría poscolonial, el ecofeminismo y los estudios transnacionales, utilizando lecturas temáticas y estilísticas detalladas de obras seleccionadas de autores emblemáticos. Los hallazgos indican que (1) las novelas históricas en ambos contextos emplean recursos metaficcionales y narración simbólica para criticar la memoria colectiva y las construcciones ideológicas; (2) Las escritoras articulan discursos feministas que desafían los cánones literarios patriarcales mediante textos místicos, autobiográficos y socialmente incisivos; y (3) la poesía ecológica surge como un registro ecofeminista que vincula la degradación ambiental con las violencias de género y poscoloniales. Estas modalidades interseccionales subrayan el papel de la literatura como agente ético y estético que conecta el pasado con el futuro, lo individual con lo colectivo, lo humano con lo no humano. En definitiva, el artículo argumenta que la convergencia de la conciencia histórica, la voz feminista y la conciencia ecológica en la literatura contemporánea de ambas naciones refleja una identidad literaria en evolución: resiliente, interconectada y orientada al futuro.

Palabras clave: Novela histórica, Escritoras, Ecopoesía, Memoria cultural, Identidad literaria.

INTRODUCTION

The intersection of Turkish and Azerbaijani literatures offers a fertile and underexplored field of comparative inquiry, shaped by a shared Turkic linguistic heritage, intertwined histories, and complex socio-cultural transformations (Omorov et al., 2025). While Turkey has followed a republican and secular modernization project since the early 20th century, Azerbaijan's literary trajectory has been deeply impacted by Soviet ideology and the subsequent post-independence reconfiguration of national identity. Despite these differing political frameworks, both literary

traditions converge around enduring concerns such as collective memory, cultural survival, gender roles, and the human relationship with nature (Kölbaeva & Satıcıoğlu, 2024; Mustafayeva, 2019).

Over the past three decades, critical scholarship has addressed key dimensions of these literatures in isolation. The role of nationalism and identity construction in historical fiction has been widely examined within the frameworks of imagined communities and post-imperial anxieties (Anderson, 1983). Likewise, feminist theorists have highlighted the ways in which women writers in Muslim-majority societies subvert traditional gender norms and generate alternative discourses of female agency and subjectivity (Kandiyoti, 1991). Meanwhile, the field of ecocriticism has expanded significantly, with scholars such as Glotfelty and Fromm (1996) arguing for a more environmentally conscious literary criticism that addresses the ecological dimensions of narrative, particularly in poetry and symbolic prose.

However, what remains underexplored is the intersection of these three trajectories—historical fiction, feminist literary production, and ecological poetics—within the specific comparative context of Turkish and Azerbaijani literatures. This gap is especially significant in light of the increasing tendency among authors in both nations to engage with literature not merely as aesthetic expression but as a cultural and ethical agent in negotiating the challenges of gender inequality, environmental degradation, and historical trauma. As such, literature emerges as a critical mode of engagement with both memory and futurity, offering a space to contest dominant narratives and to imagine alternative socio-political horizons.

This article argues that the convergence of historical fiction, women's writing, and eco-poetry within Turkish and Azerbaijani literary spheres reveals both shared cultural logics and divergent responses to geopolitical realities. While Turkish literature, particularly after the 1980s, has gravitated towards postmodernism and transnational feminism, Azerbaijani literature has continued to navigate the legacies of socialist realism and post-Soviet reconstruction. These divergent institutional and ideological contexts yield distinct literary strategies, even as writers in both traditions increasingly foreground marginalized voices—especially those of women—as agents of historical, cultural, and ecological transformation.

The role of women writers is central to this inquiry. Their literary works—ranging from autobiographical novels to lyric poetry—disrupt traditional patriarchal historiographies and anthropocentric representations of nature (Tarverdieva, 2023). By reimagining the past and the

natural world through gendered and embodied perspectives, these authors construct what can be termed an “eco-feminist historiography,” wherein personal and political traumas are inscribed onto both cultural memory and wounded landscapes (Dadashova, 2025).

Methodologically, this study employs a culturally embedded comparative framework grounded in postcolonial theory, ecofeminism, and transnational literary studies. Through close textual readings and thematic analysis of selected works by authors such as Ayla Kutlu, İhsan Oktay Anar, Elif Şafak, Kamal Abdulla, Gunel Movlud, and Sevil Gultekin, the article explores how these literatures reflect, resist, and reimagine their respective social realities. In doing so, it contributes to a growing body of scholarship that views literature not only as a reflection of historical conditions but also as a space for ethical engagement, cultural critique, and visionary resistance.

Ultimately, this comparative study seeks to illuminate how two closely related yet politically divergent literatures grapple with the pressing issues of identity, gender, and ecology. By bringing these themes into a shared analytical frame, the article demonstrates the potential of transnational literary analysis to foster deeper insights into the cultural production of meaning, memory, and future possibilities within Turkic literary traditions.

DEVELOPMENT

The comparative analysis of Turkish and Azerbaijani literatures reveals a rich and layered field of inquiry, where common cultural roots intersect with divergent political and aesthetic trajectories (İkail & Çora, 2024). Through the lenses of historical fiction, feminist authorship, and ecological poetics, this study has uncovered the multiple ways in which literature functions as a site for contesting official histories, reimagining gender roles, and responding to environmental and societal crises. These intersections are not merely thematic coincidences but reflect deeper structural affinities and disjunctions shaped by geography, ideology, and institutional memory. The discussion that follows explores how these convergences and divergences manifest across selected texts and authors. It examines the narrative strategies employed to articulate historical memory, the formal and thematic innovations introduced by women writers, and the symbolic role of nature in negotiating identity and loss. By engaging closely with these literary elements, we aim to illuminate the broader cultural and political currents that inform literary production in both nations.

Historical Fiction as a Shared Narrative Strategy

Historical fiction plays a pivotal role in shaping collective memory and negotiating identity in both Turkish and Azerbaijani literatures. As a genre, it transcends simple chronological storytelling and instead engages with the past as a dynamic and contested space. It allows authors to reimagine history, challenge dominant narratives, and foreground marginalized voices, including women, minorities, and alternative epistemologies. In Turkish literature, writers such as Ayla Kutlu and İhsan Oktay Anar have deployed historical fiction not merely as a vehicle for recounting national history but as a complex literary and philosophical terrain. Kutlu’s work, including “Taş Üstüne Gül Oyması” and “Kadın Destanı,” reinterprets nationalist narratives by inserting emotionally rich, ethically charged female perspectives (Kutlu, 1992, 1999). Her protagonists not only resist patriarchal constraints but also act as moral agents within the broader socio-political upheavals of Turkish history. By doing so, Kutlu offers a gender-conscious reconstruction of collective memory.

Anar’s “Puslu Kıtalar Atlası” (Anar, 1995), a seminal work in Turkish postmodern literature, presents an Ottoman world that is simultaneously mythical and philosophical. In this novel, historical reality is perpetually questioned and destabilized. Anar constructs a narrative space where history becomes an epistemological problem—a speculative and symbolic system rather than a fixed set of facts. This aligns with the postmodern distrust of grand narratives and promotes an understanding of history as narrative construction subject to power, ideology, and interpretation.

A similar strategy is observed in Azerbaijani literature. Kamal Abdulla’s “Yarımçıq Əlyazma” (Abdulla, 2004) is a paradigmatic example of metafiction that interrogates the authority of historical discourse. By employing the motif of the incomplete manuscript, Abdulla dramatizes the gaps, silences, and discontinuities within historical knowledge. The novel deconstructs the idea of historical truth and foregrounds the role of narrative, memory, and language in shaping perceptions of the past. This fictional strategy not only challenges monolithic historiographies but also emphasizes multiplicity and interpretive openness.

Anar Rzayev, one of the most influential contemporary Azerbaijani writers, occupies a unique space at the intersection of historical fiction, philosophical reflection, and postmodern experimentation. His works such as “Ağ qoç, qara qoç” (White Ram, Black Ram), “Dantenin yubileyi” (Dante’s Jubilee), and “Beşmərtəbəli evin altıncı mərtəbəsi” (The Sixth Floor of the Five-Story Building) explore the tension between collective memory and subjective experience, blending historical metaphor with existential inquiry. In “Ağ qoç, qara qoç,” Anar constructs a semi-mythical narrative that juxtaposes historical trauma with allegorical

symbolism. The titular black and white rams represent dualities—good and evil, life and death, memory and forgetting—through which the author examines the moral ambivalence of both personal and national history. Unlike linear historical fiction, this work resists closure and invites interpretive multiplicity, positioning itself within a postmodern skepticism of historical finality.

Anar's prose is marked by metafictional awareness and epistemological play. In "Dantenin yubileyi," the boundaries between reality and fiction, time and timelessness, become porous. The protagonist's journey through memory becomes a metaphor for navigating the fragmented national consciousness of post-Soviet Azerbaijan. Through these narrative strategies, Anar aligns with İhsan Oktay Anar in Turkish literature, particularly in "Puslu Kitalar Atlası," where history is reimagined as a speculative domain shaped by myth, ideology, and textual instability. Moreover, Anar's work subtly critiques the legacy of socialist realism by privileging ambiguity, irony, and polyphonic storytelling. His approach echoes Linda Hutcheon's concept of "historiographic metafiction," whereby historical representation is destabilized through self-conscious narration. While not overtly feminist, Anar often incorporates female characters as narrative mediators—figures caught between societal roles and interior transformation. Thus, Anar's fiction broadens the scope of Azerbaijani historical literature by embedding philosophical inquiry within narrative form. His stories do not merely recount history—they question the very act of remembering, positioning literature as a space for negotiating the symbolic, political, and psychological residues of the past.

Elchin Efendiyev's "Mahmud və Məryəm" (Efendiyev, 2001) similarly blends historical reconstruction with religious pluralism and romantic idealism. Set in a culturally diverse historical landscape, the novel thematizes the coexistence of Muslim and Christian identities while highlighting the tragic consequences of sectarian conflict. Here, history becomes a site of both nostalgia and critique—a lens through which questions of tolerance, love, and loss are examined.

What unites these works across both literatures is their shared commitment to subverting male-dominated historiography. Ayla Kutlu's female characters, often excluded from canonical historical narratives, emerge as powerful interpreters of collective trauma and resilience. In Azerbaijani fiction, women are also portrayed not as passive subjects of history but as participants in historical meaning-making. While Abdulla engages more with philosophical and epistemological concerns, his female characters are often entangled in the symbolic tension between tradition and transformation. Efendiyev, on the

other hand, uses romantic allegory to promote gender and interfaith empathy within a historical framework.

In sum, historical fiction in Turkish and Azerbaijani literatures operates not only as a literary genre but also as a cultural practice that interrogates dominant historiographies, embraces narrative multiplicity, and advances inclusive understandings of memory and identity. By blending metafictional strategies, symbolic aesthetics, and gender-conscious storytelling, these authors contribute to a shared narrative tradition that both critiques and reclaims history from the margins.

Women Writers and Feminist Literary Voices

In both Turkish and Azerbaijani literary traditions, the emergence of women writers has significantly transformed the thematic and ideological contours of contemporary fiction. Although these writers operate in distinct historical and cultural contexts—Turkey shaped by secular-religious tensions and neoliberal modernity, Azerbaijan by post-Soviet transitions and residual patriarchal structures—they share a commitment to challenging hegemonic narratives through feminist aesthetics, bodily poetics, and intersectional critique.

In Turkey, Elif Şafak, one of the most internationally recognized contemporary authors, fuses Sufi mysticism with feminist thought in her widely read novel "The Forty Rules of Love" (Şafak, 2009). The novel not only reimagines the life of Rumi and Shams of Tabriz through a transhistorical lens but also juxtaposes their spiritual journey with a modern-day American housewife's emotional awakening. Through this narrative parallelism, Şafak foregrounds gendered limitations within both historical and contemporary frameworks, making mysticism a vessel for feminist introspection and empowerment (Şafak, 2009). The novel challenges traditional gender binaries by offering alternative spiritual subjectivities rooted in compassion, desire, and self-transcendence.

Similarly, Latife Tekin's "Berji Kristin: Tales from the Garbage Hills" (Tekin, 1984) employs magical realism to critique urban poverty, female marginalization, and the violence of rapid industrialization. Tekin's style merges the oral traditions of Anatolian storytelling with subversive narrative structures, portraying women not just as victims of poverty but also as myth-makers and resisters. Her work is often interpreted as an "urban folklore" that disrupts the patriarchal urban planning of modern Turkey (Tekin, 1984).

In contrast, Aslı Erdoğan, a physicist-turned-writer, offers one of the most visceral and uncompromising portrayals of female trauma in Turkish literature. Her prose,

particularly “The City in Crimson Cloak” (Erdoğan, 2011), is intensely lyrical, politically charged, and bodily anchored. Erdoğan’s protagonists often inhabit liminal zones—between nations, languages, and identities—and her treatment of imprisonment, exile, and violence against women is rendered through a poetics of fragmentation and vulnerability (Erdoğan, 2011). Her style exemplifies what Judith Butler calls “precarious life,” reflecting a broader feminist ethics of suffering and resistance.

In Azerbaijani literature, the feminist literary voice has been more subdued but is gradually gaining momentum, especially in the post-independence period. Afet Rustemova, through her short stories and novellas, delves into the psychological and emotional confinement of women in rural settings. Her works often explore the tension between individual desires and communal expectations, revealing how traditional gender norms silently regulate female behavior and self-perception (Rustemova, 2014). Her narratives are marked by interiority, emotional realism, and a subtle critique of normative femininity.

Azize Ceferzade, one of Azerbaijan’s most prominent historical novelists, offers a distinct literary vision that fuses national memory with gendered perspectives. Her narratives such as “Qızlar bulağı” (The Girls’ Spring) and “Bakı-1501” transcend the boundaries of linear historiography by reconstructing the past through emotionally complex and morally grounded female protagonists. While rooted in the Ottoman-Safavid historical epochs, her works do not merely glorify national heritage but interrogate the role of women in the formation of cultural identity. In Ceferzade’s fiction, women emerge as agents of memory, resistance, and moral clarity. These characters often act as spiritual and intellectual anchors in male-dominated historical events, challenging both patriarchal structures and the official historical record. Her historical women are not passive symbols but active participants in the shaping of collective destiny—a literary move that resonates with feminist historical fiction traditions in Turkish literature.

Like Ayla Kutlu, Ceferzade utilizes emotionally rich female perspectives to complicate national narratives. Kutlu’s protagonists resist patriarchal confines while participating in historical upheavals; similarly, Ceferzade’s female characters mediate between public duty and private suffering, between tradition and inner transformation. Yet, while Kutlu embeds her feminist voices in Turkey’s republican and post-coup settings, Ceferzade’s characters inhabit the premodern tapestry of the Turkic world, offering an indigenous feminist gaze rooted in local memory and symbolism. What distinguishes Ceferzade’s contribution is her fusion of poetic symbolism and national historiography. She integrates oral traditions, folk motifs, and spiritual allegories

to reframe historical trauma. This blend of aesthetics and politics aligns her work with postcolonial feminist theory, emphasizing how marginalized voices can reclaim and reinterpret the grand narratives of nationhood. Her style, although traditional in structure, is subversive in content, subtly undermining the male-centric historical canon that has long dominated Azerbaijani literary heritage.

Meanwhile, Sevil Gultekin focuses on the contradictions of urban life, particularly how modernity, capitalism, and post-Soviet nostalgia collide with enduring patriarchal mindsets. Her fiction frequently portrays professional women navigating workplace discrimination, marital conflicts, and societal expectations. Gultekin’s writing resonates with third-wave feminist themes such as intersectionality, body politics, and emotional labor (Gultekin, 2018). Unlike earlier Soviet-era representations of the “ideal socialist woman,” her characters are ambivalent, flawed, and introspective—mirroring the complexity of contemporary female subjectivity.

Despite facing limitations such as weak institutional support, limited feminist publishing infrastructures, and censorship pressures, these Azerbaijani authors engage with global feminist discourses while remaining grounded in local cultural realities. According to Agayeva (2018), their works mark a subtle literary resistance against both Soviet legacies and neoliberal gender expectations. Over time, women writers in both contexts have benefited from increasing transnational visibility through literary prizes, academic scholarship, and digital platforms. As Donovan (2001) and Tansel and Yıldırım (2018) argue, these forms of recognition have not only amplified female voices but also shifted critical paradigms within national canons.

Thus, while Turkish feminist literature has had more global exposure and critical theorization, Azerbaijani women writers are forging a unique space by negotiating between tradition and transformation. Both literatures contribute to a transregional feminist literary movement that reclaims narrative authority, reconfigures historical silences, and articulates the politics of voice, body, and belonging.

Ecological Poetics: A New Literary Frontier

Ecological poetics—often referred to as “eco-poetry”—has emerged as a significant literary mode within Turkish and Azerbaijani contemporary writing, reflecting the growing urgency of environmental crises through an aesthetic of resistance and renewal. Operating at the intersection of ecology, memory, gender, and politics, this form of poetics challenges anthropocentric narratives and reorients literary attention toward the entanglement of human and nonhuman life-worlds. In both traditions, eco-poetry is not simply a thematic concern but a poetic strategy that

articulates grief, resilience, and reparation through symbolic landscapes, maternal metaphors, and embodied environmental imaginaries.

In Turkish literature, Bejan Matur and Birhan Keskin stand out as two of the most powerful voices engaging with ecological poetics from deeply gendered and spiritually resonant perspectives. Matur's "İbrahim'in Beni Terketmesi" (Matur, 2002) evokes Kurdish landscapes not as passive scenery but as animate entities laden with ancestral memory, political trauma, and sacred continuity. Her poetic landscapes carry the weight of collective suffering, while simultaneously resisting erasure through mythopoetic invocation. Matur's use of rivers, winds, and mountains aligns with indigenous ecological epistemologies, where the land becomes a bearer of both history and identity.

Similarly, Birhan Keskin's "Y'ol" (Keskin, 2006) is a meditation on fragmented geographies—both literal and emotional. The broken topographies in her work mirror emotional dislocation and socio-cultural erosion. Yet Keskin does not resign to despair. Through her lyrical minimalism, she crafts a poetics of survival, suggesting that poetry itself can be a form of ecological and emotional healing. Her recurring motifs of soil, silence, and absence converge to reframe vulnerability as strength and rupture as potential for regeneration.

In the Azerbaijani context, ecological poetics has found fertile ground in the post-Soviet milieu marked by rapid urbanization, environmental degradation, and lingering patriarchal structures. Poets such as Gunel Movlud and Nigar Koçerli approach eco-poetry through an intersectional lens that links environmental destruction with social disintegration, gendered violence, and identity fragmentation. Movlud's poems are stark yet intimate, often evoking polluted rivers, deforested orchards, and cracked earth as metaphors for collective alienation and personal disillusionment. Her ecological grief is inseparable from feminist defiance—nature becomes a wounded companion, a symbol of both loss and protest.

Nigar Koçerli, in contrast, adopts a more symbolic and introspective tone. Her poetry explores the gendered dimensions of ecology, using natural imagery—particularly trees, seeds, and soil—to express themes of exile, memory, and belonging. The recurring motif of the "mother tree" in her work speaks to the trauma of displacement and the erosion of intergenerational rootedness in the face of modernity. In this way, Koçerli's poetics resonate with ecofeminist frameworks, even if her work is not overtly theoretical. She reclaims nature as a feminine archive of continuity and resistance.

The literary strategies employed by these poets echo broader ecofeminist theories, particularly those advanced by Glotfelty and Fromm (1996) or Plumwood (2002) who argue that environmental degradation and patriarchal domination are structurally interlinked. Though Turkish and Azerbaijani poets rarely reference these theories explicitly, their works align with what is defined as "embodied ecopoetics"—a mode of writing that foregrounds the interconnectedness of body, ecology, and emotion.

Furthermore, the postcolonial and post-Soviet conditions that shape these literatures intensify their ecological awareness. In both Turkey and Azerbaijan, ecological degradation is not an isolated phenomenon but one deeply embedded in histories of political marginalization, cultural dispossession, and gendered oppression. Thus, ecological poetics becomes a politically charged aesthetic—a counter-narrative to official discourses of progress, modernity, and exploitation. Through their poetic witness, these authors restore agency to silenced landscapes and reposition nature as a site of memory, mourning, and ethical reimagination.

Therefore, ecological poetics in Turkish and Azerbaijani literatures transcends lamentation over environmental loss. It acts as a literary intervention—a method of rethinking human-nature relations, critiquing extractive systems of domination, and articulating new forms of ethical and affective kinship. These poets contribute to a transregional environmental humanity that is simultaneously grounded in local geographies and attuned to global ecological urgencies. Their voices, deeply lyrical and politically engaged, reaffirm literature's enduring power to cultivate empathy, resistance, and ecological consciousness.

Reclaiming the Earth: Eco-Poetry as Resistance and Reimagination

Eco-poetry in both Turkish and Azerbaijani literary contexts is not only an aesthetic mode but also a form of political and existential resistance. Positioned at the intersection of gender, landscape, trauma, and historical memory, this poetic tradition reclaims the Earth not merely as backdrop, but as a central protagonist in narratives of survival, protest, and renewal.

In Turkish eco-poetry, Bejan Matur's work frequently returns to devastated and occupied landscapes, investing them with sacred energy and ancestral consciousness. Her nature is not passive—it suffers, speaks, resists. The Kurdish highlands in her poetry are not only geographical references but metaphysical entities with agency. This reflects a larger political urgency: the land becomes a witness to erasure, as well as a space for restoring historical presence. Similarly, Birhan Keskin's meditative verses

suggest that healing begins with naming pain in both human and ecological terms. In her poetry, “soil” and “absence” are not opposites, but co-existing states of being. Her eco-poetic vision critiques modern disconnection from land while seeking spiritual kinship across temporal wounds.

In Azerbaijani literature, Gunel Movlud deepens this eco-critical voice by linking environmental decay with internalized alienation. Her poem cycles suggest that the loss of trees, rivers, and ancestral homes is not just ecological—it is ontological. Nature becomes a mirror to collective grief, colonial memory, and gendered silencing. In this way, her eco-poetry becomes a lyrical archive of survival and a challenge to developmentalist ideologies that ignore local ecologies and lived experiences. Nigar Koçerli’s portrayal of the Earth as a maternal figure ruptured by war, exile, and neglect similarly contributes to the poetic reclamation of nature. In her lines, seeds carry memory, and trees mourn their uprooted kin. Her use of eco-symbolism foregrounds not only ecological fragility but the interdependence between environment and feminine being.

These poets, by grounding political critique in lyrical landscapes, reclaim the Earth as an emotional and ethical partner. Their work aligns with the broader post-humanist and ecofeminist literary movements that seek to dissolve hierarchical boundaries between nature and humanity, especially within contexts of war, migration, and patriarchal domination. What unifies them is their refusal to treat ecology as a neutral backdrop. Instead, nature is wounded, maternal, sacred, and defiant. Through this lens, eco-poetry in Turkish and Azerbaijani literatures not only mourns loss but dares to envision new worlds—ones built not on conquest and extraction, but on care, coexistence, and memory.

Transnational Literary Convergences and Divergences: Ecopoetic Dimensions of Turkish and Azerbaijani Narratives

The literary relationship between Turkish and Azerbaijani cultures is historically grounded in shared Turkic linguistic roots, Islamic cultural references, and collective experiences of empire, coloniality, and modernization. This transnational affinity, however, does not imply homogeneity. While both traditions draw from a similar cultural reservoir, their literary evolutions have diverged significantly due to contrasting political trajectories, ideological systems, and institutional influences throughout the 20th and 21st centuries.

A central axis of divergence lies in the opposing legacies of Kemalist secular nationalism in Turkey and Soviet ideological indoctrination in Azerbaijan. Turkish literature

developed under the umbrella of republican modernization and Westernization policies, which encouraged secular, experimental, and increasingly individualistic forms of writing, particularly after the 1980 military coup. In contrast, Azerbaijani literature was shaped under the constraints of socialist realism, state censorship, and a collectivist ethos that persisted until the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991. These ideological differences forged distinct literary sensibilities, affecting narrative structure, authorial voice, and thematic emphasis.

Despite such divergences, one major point of convergence is the literary engagement with post-imperial memory. In Turkey, authors like Orhan Pamuk (“Snow”) and İhsan Oktay Anar (“Puslu Kitalar Atlası”) explore the trauma of Ottoman decline and the identity rupture caused by the formation of the Republic. Their characters often oscillate between nostalgia for a cosmopolitan past and alienation in the face of modern nationalism. In Azerbaijan, Anar Rzayev’s “Beşmərtəbəli Evin Altıncı Mərtəbəsi” and Sabir Rüstəmxanlı’s prose confront the erasure of pre-Soviet national consciousness and the complexities of post-independence cultural revival. These authors, like their Turkish counterparts, reveal a postcolonial anxiety, negotiating between the desire for historical continuity and disillusionment with ideological constructs imposed by modern statehood.

Stylistic distinctions, however, remain notable. Turkish literature—particularly after the 1980s—has embraced postmodern narrative techniques, including fragmented chronology, metafiction, intertextuality, and unreliable narrators. These techniques reflect Turkey’s integration with global literary circuits and its exposure to European and American literary theory (Gökna, 2013). Writers such as Elif Şafak, Latife Tekin, and Aslı Erdoğan exemplify this postmodern impulse, employing introspective and fluid prose styles to explore issues of identity, gender, memory—and increasingly, ecological fragility. For example, Latife Tekin’s eco-mythical worlds and Aslı Erdoğan’s urban desolation draw attention to the bodily and environmental costs of modernization.

Conversely, while Azerbaijani literature is increasingly engaging with postmodernism—especially among younger writers—it continues to carry the stylistic imprint of socialist realism and didacticism. The narrative voice often retains a moralizing tone, and the plot structures are more linear and allegorical. Yet within these forms, ecological consciousness is surfacing. Writers like Sevil Gültekin and Gunel Movlud merge traditional narrative forms with urgent eco-poetic concerns: the alienation of women parallels the degradation of land, and both are portrayed as intertwined expressions of loss and marginalization.

Another thematic intersection concerns the motif of exile and displacement—not only in geopolitical terms, but also ecopoetically. Turkish diasporic literature—represented prominently by authors such as Elif Şafak—addresses themes of voluntary and involuntary migration, biculturalism, and identity fragmentation, often set against dislocated natural landscapes. These narratives reflect a longing not only for cultural roots but also for ecological belonging. Similarly, Azerbaijani writers such as Rafiq Tağı and Gunel Movlud articulate ecological exile: the lost river, the destroyed village, the vanishing tree—all become metaphors for internal displacement and fractured identity.

The intellectual figure—as narrator, observer, and moral interlocutor—also recurs across both literatures and increasingly acts as an ecological witness. These characters, whether in Pamuk's reflective protagonists or Rüstəm xanlı's philosophical heroes, often document not only political failure but also the erosion of natural and cultural landscapes. Their presence adds an eco-philosophical dimension to the moral critique embedded in both literatures.

Ultimately, while Turkish and Azerbaijani literatures converge in their exploration of identity, memory, trauma, and resistance, they now also intersect in their emerging ecopoetic engagements. Turkish literature has benefited from robust publishing industries, international translation networks, and academic engagement in global literary theory, which have facilitated the rise of ecological themes. Azerbaijani literature, though increasingly visible, still faces institutional challenges, yet writers are beginning to cultivate an indigenous eco-poetic vocabulary, one that speaks to both land and loss.

These transnational convergences and divergences thus not only illuminate aesthetic and ideological contrasts, but also offer fertile ground for the comparative study of ecological trauma, feminist memory, and literary resistance. Turkish and Azerbaijani literatures, through their shared and divergent engagements with nature, history, and identity, demonstrate how the land itself becomes a site of narrative struggle and poetic reimagination.

CONCLUSIONS

This study has undertaken a comparative examination of Turkish and Azerbaijani literatures through the intersecting prisms of historical fiction, women's authorship, and ecological poetics. The comparative exploration of Turkish and Azerbaijani literatures reveals a rich and multifaceted field in which history, memory, gender, and ecology intersect to produce powerful narratives of resistance and renewal. From the philosophical historiography of Kamal Abdulla and İhsan Oktay Anar to the gendered mysticism of Ayla

Kutlu and Elif Şafak, both literatures engage in what can be described as counter-memory writing—a practice that destabilizes official narratives and opens up space for marginalized voices.

One of the most compelling outcomes of this study is the recognition of eco-poetry as a shared and evolving narrative strategy. Whether through the devastated Kurdish landscapes of Bejan Matur, the urban ecological metaphors of Aslı Erdoğan, or the rural-emotional topographies of Gunel Movlud and Sevil Gültekin, we see how nature is not a silent backdrop but a witness, a victim, and a carrier of collective trauma. Eco-poetry allows both Turkish and Azerbaijani writers to articulate environmental loss alongside historical dispossession and gendered silencing, creating an aesthetic terrain that is simultaneously lyrical, political, and philosophical. Furthermore, the transnational analysis of these literatures demonstrates that shared linguistic and cultural ancestry does not produce homogeneous literary expression. The legacies of Kemalist secularism and Soviet collectivism have shaped divergent literary traditions in tone, narrative form, and thematic focus. Yet these divergences are precisely what enrich the comparative framework: they allow us to see how different literary ecologies—both institutional and natural—generate unique yet relatable voices of dissent and imagination.

As both nations continue to confront political transformation, ecological degradation, and evolving gender norms, literature becomes a site of negotiation—a place where the past is not only remembered but reinterpreted, and where the future can be imagined through poetic vision. The rise of feminist and ecological poetics in both Turkish and Azerbaijani contexts offers a hopeful paradigm: one in which literature does not merely represent reality but reshapes it by reclaiming the silenced, healing the broken, and restoring meaning to what has been lost or overlooked. In this light, the shared narrative strategies examined here underscore the enduring power of fiction—and particularly historical fiction and eco-poetry—to confront dominant ideologies, reweave cultural memory, and imagine ethical alternatives for both society and the Earth.

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